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The Haunted Chamber

A Romantic Comedy
in One Act

By GRACE GRISWOLD



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A ROMANTIC COMEDY

IN ONE ACT

By

GRACE GRISWOLD

*Author of "Billie's First Love" and "His Japanese
Wife"*

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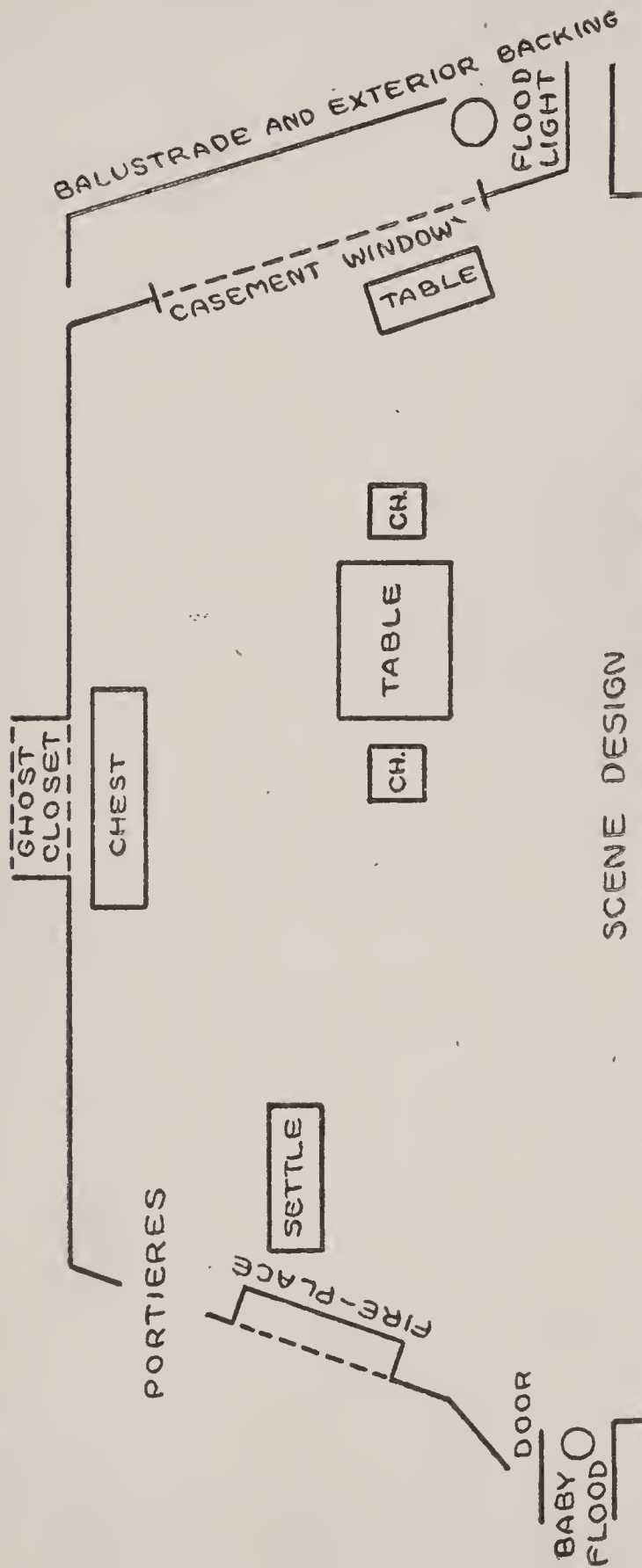
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SCENE DESIGN

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER

CHARACTERS

LORD PETER MONAHAN—*The new lord—a debonaire young Irishman of the period, more English than Irish, however, in manners and speech, as he was educated at Eton and Oxford and has spent most of his time since in England and on the Continent. He is about thirty and is thoroughly sophisticated. He has no share in HOGAN'S delusions concerning the Haunted Chamber, though he is somewhat affected by the mysterious happenings that follow, and by the end of the play is thoroughly in the atmosphere of the place.*

LADY KATHERINE—*Distant cousin to LORD PETER, a typical Irish girl of beauty and charm. She is the product of a dual existence;—on the one hand, steeped in the traditions of the house, living in a halo of romance, shunning the dissipated associates of the late Lord of the castle, and dreading those of the new Lord, which she believes will be of the same kind—on the other hand, devoting herself untiringly to the alleviation of the condition of the tenantry, ground down by heartless overseers.*

HOGAN—*Usual type of upper Irish servant: respectful, but garrulous when allowed to be, infused with the unreasoning dog loyalty to his supe-*

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER

riors, whether deserving or not, which is characteristic of the hereditary servant.

GHOST OF THE FORMER LADY KATHERINE.

NOTE.—The players should bear in mind that the Monologues are not soliloquies, but are addressed to the ghost.

SCENE REPRESENTS—

Haunted room in Monahan Castle, at midnight.

TIME—Present.

ENTRANCES AND WALL FURNISHINGS—

Walls tapestried, or panelled in oak. At center back, starting at the height of an old chest which stands against it, is a portrait of Lady Katherine in the costume of the Second Empire, with a scarf thrown back over her arms. She is stepping through parted portieres, which she holds back with her hands. The portrait is painted on scrim, so that the ghost figure may be seen through it at the finish, and the whole panel is made to slide away for the entrance of Lady Katherine. It should look quite dim and dusty. Behind the panel is a platform, the height of the chest, forming the floor of a small closet, hung in black. In front of this closet and back of the portrait is a pair of draped portieres like those in the picture. Panel must slide easily, and be manipulated from behind.

Entrances are R.1 and R.3, also through case-ment window which occupies most of the wall L. For backing, there should be a balcony balustrade and drop showing trees and tops of tall shrubbery.

Entrance R.3 is covered by portiere. R.1 has

a door to lock. Between these entrances is a fireplace with high mantel and chimney sloping into wall.

NOTE—The tapestried walls can be effectively faked by purple cheesecloth over figured wallpaper, or an old landscape painted set.

COSTUMES—

LORD PETER appears first in conventional evening clothes. He changes from these to a costume of the Second Empire, which he finds in the chest. If the suit is to be made, it will be effective to have a purple madder coat, lined with light gray over a vest of darker gray and the knee-breeches of rose madder. The coat is cut well open in the front with broad tails at the back, revers of gray, and rolling collar of the same. Sleeves are tight and set up at the shoulder. Vest is cut low, with revers. Fancy white shirt, with high rolling collar and small tie to match coat. Gray stockings and low-cut slippers.

LADY KATHERINE's dress can be of pale green taffeta, high-waisted and open down the front from the waist line, revealing a ruffled lace petticoat. Belt and bow of Naples yellow. Skirt festooned in lace and yellow ribbon, with knots of lavender, rose pink and Alice blue. Short, puffed sleeves. Dress buttons at the back. It is in one piece.

HOGAN—Either in uniform, or as conventional upper servant.

GHOST—In chiffons vaguely suggesting Lady Katherine's costume.

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER

Curtain goes up on a perfectly dark stage. Cathedral clock strikes 12. Flutter of lightning through casement windows L. reveals general outlines of room. Distant rumble of thunder, accompanied by echoing footsteps, as if coming down a long hall, are heard. All this must be deliberate. As the footsteps stop outside of door R.I, voice of LORD PETER is heard outside.

LORD PETER. Is this the room? Why don't you open the door?

HOGAN. (*Outside*) By all the Saints, Lord Peter, if ye shtruck me dead in me tracks, I couldn't open that dure.

LORD PETER. Probably not, if you were dead. Give me the keys. (*Rattle of keys, door opens*) Well, aren't you going to light me in?

HOGAN. (*Chattering and shaking with fear*) Y-yes, me Lord.

(*Enter HOGAN, candle rocking and knees shaking together; lights half up; places candle on table L.C. Swishing sound on balcony L. LORD PETER, meanwhile, has entered and HOGAN, with a cry of terror, plunges into his arms in an effort to escape. LORD PETER deposits him in a chair R. of table, closes door and locks it.*)

LORD PETER. You shall go when I tell you, not before.

HOGAN. You are a brave man, Lord Peter. Didn't you hear that sound outside just now?

LORD PETER. What sound?

HOGAN. Like the swish of skirts. By St. Patrick, it must have been the ghost of Lady Katherine herself. The clock struck 12 as we came along the hall.

LORD PETER. (*Looking around as if taking in the room for the first time*) What of that?

HOGAN. Sure, and it's the fatal hour that the ghost of Lady Katherine shteels along the balcony and enters this room, where she was so unhappy, poor soul.

LORD PETER. You're a fool. (*Crosses to window L.*)

HOGAN. Yes, Lord Peter.

(*The wind begins to rise.*)

LORD PETER. Our entrance startled the rooks. That was what you heard.

HOGAN. I hope so, Lord Peter. (*Peering cautiously out of window; lightning flashes and he starts back with a cry of terror*)

LORD PETER. (*Coming down back of table and lighting cigar*) I understand you served the old lord faithfully all your life.

HOGAN. Yes, me Lord, thank you, Sir.

LORD PETER. And I hope you will be as faithful to me.

HOGAN. That I will, Lord Peter.

(*Goes over and prepares fire in fireplace.*)

LORD PETER. But this ghost business has got to stop. I am not going to have any dark corners or

useless rooms in my castle. If I send you to light a guest to this room, I expect you to do it without any of this nonsense. I am sleeping here to-night simply to prove that it is all poppycock.

(Rising wind and rumble of thunder.)

HOGAN. Did you hear that, Lord Peter?

LORD PETER. *(Going to window)* Yes, I heard the wind and the thunder. The moon will be out presently.

HOGAN. *(Admiringly)* You're a brave man, Lord Peter.

LORD PETER. Not at all, but with a little common sense and this old friend of the family *(Pouring out glass of whiskey)* I defy all the ghosts of Christendom.

(Simultaneous flash of lightning and crash of thunder, with rain and wind.)

HOGAN. *(With great vehemence)* Don't drink to that blasphemous sintimint, Lord Peter, the spirits of the departed are angry.

LORD PETER. *(Good-naturedly)* Very well, Hogan, to please you, we'll make it a welcome to all the ghosts of the Monahans.

HOGAN. Heaven forbid, Lord Peter, would you turn Monahan Castle into a grave-yard?

LORD PETER. Not that, either? Then here's one that will surely please you. To the spirits—of good old Irish whisky.

HOGAN. Ah! Now ye're talkin'!

LORD PETER. *(Holding up his glass and addressing it)* Good old Irish friend. Joy of the joyous. Solace of the sorrowful. Binder of bonds and breeder of brawls. Inspiration and curse. Friend and enemy. What wit you have engendered! What

crimes you have provoked! What vistas of glory! What ashes of desolation! What exhilaration! What despair! What dreams and what nightmares! And—what a head in the morning! (*Sits L. of table*)

HOGAN. You're a true Monahan, Lord Peter.

LORD PETER. I hope to prove that I am. A lively tribe. Eh, Hogan?

HOGAN. So they were, Lord Peter, more shame to them.

LORD PETER. (*Sharp look from LORD PETER*) Eh——

HOGAN. Beggin' your pardon, Sir.

LORD PETER. You may go now. (*Handing him keys*)

HOGAN. Yes, Lord Peter. (*Going toward door*) May heaven defend your Lordship and keep away the evil spirits. Good night, Lord Peter.

LORD PETER. Good night, Hogan. Oh, Hogan.

HOGAN. (*At door*) Yes, me Lord.

LORD PETER. Why did the little Lady Katherine refuse to see me this morning when I arrived?

HOGAN. (*Evasively*) She was not feelin' real smart, Lord Peter.

LORD PETER. Nonsense. I saw her soon after on her little bay mare, riding as if the Banshee were after her. She has avoided me, which seems a little ungrateful as I have written her that the death of the old Lord will make no difference so far as she is concerned, and that she is still to consider Monahan Castle her home. She is quite alone in the world, I understand, and I desire to treat her like a brother.

HOGAN. (*Coming c.*) I fear you cannot do that, Lord Peter. Even the old Lord could not persuade her to meet strangers, yet she will wander about the castle at night, fearless as a cat. She has even been known to enter this room, though Heaven only

knows how she gets in, for the door has never been opened since the murder till this day.

LORD PETER. Does she know that I am here to-night?

HOGAN. Indeed no, Lord Peter. Her ladyship's rooms are next to these. She would be terrified if she knew you were so near.

LORD PETER. Indeed. Am I such a monster?

HOGAN. Not that, Lord Peter. If you were the devil himself (*Look from LORD PETER*), beggin' your pardon, it would be all the same. Ever since the first Lady Katherine (*Bowing ceremoniously to picture*), Heaven bless your beauteous ladyship—ever since poor Lady Katherine went mad afther her gallant young husband was killed on that very balcony by her father, the Monahan women have been a little peculiar here (*Tapping his forehead*) and they are more daft by night than by day, for it was at night that the poor young man met his doom—more shame to the violent old Lord. Never since that time has there been a happy marriage in this castle, and it is said that only the kiss of true love will ever take the curse from the daughters of Monahan and lay the troubled ghost of poor old Lady Katherine. (*As HOGAN turns to salute the portrait again, a shadow passes over it, which throws him into another spasm of terror*) Saints and angels defend us! Did you see her smile?

LORD PETER. (*Rising and pouring out a drink*) Here, here, Hogan, brace up. Drink to the repose of old Lady Katherine, it will steady your nerves.

HOGAN. I'll do that, Lord Peter, with all me heart. (*Drinks and hands out glass for another*)

LORD PETER. And another to the little Lady Katherine.

HOGAN. Lord bless her little ladyship. May the kiss of true love come speedily, with happiness for her and peace to castle Monahan.

LORD PETER. I'll join you in that toast, Hogan. (*Drinking*) And another to the happy man who bestows that blessing upon my pretty cousin. (*Drinks*) As pretty as her namesake, isn't she, Hogan? (*Glancing at portrait*)

HOGAN. The same, Lord Peter, they might be twins.

LORD PETER. (*LORD PETER'S potations have now taken the effect of putting him into a chivalrous frame of mind*) By Jove, he shall be worthy of her, or he shall share the fate of the first adventurous wooer. (*Goes over to window*)

HOGAN. And curse the poor old castle with another ghost? Wan's enough, Lord Peter. (*HOGAN also is beginning to loosen up and become garrulous*) Why not win her yourself? Wasn't the poor man a gallant young kinsman like yourself, and wasn't his name Lord Peter Monahan, and wasn't he handsome like your gracious Lordship? Never has Castle Monahan been blessed with a master so noble, so handsome, so ginerius, so—here's to—— (*Holding out glass for another filling*)

LORD PETER. (*With dignity*) That will do, Hogan, you may go.

HOGAN. Yes, Lord Peter. (*Starting to door and coming back*) I don't like to lave ye alone, Lord Peter. Heaven knows what thim spirits will do to ye.

LORD PETER. (*With a half smile*) Which ones?

HOGAN. Both. If there's a Monahan Ghost within smellin' distance of that—ye won't be lonesome. (*Unlocks door and peers out*) The hall is terrible dark, Lord Peter.

LORD PETER. (*Taking candle*) I'll light you to the landing.

HOGAN. You've a good heart, Lord Peter. Heaven bless your worship.

(Exits, leaving door open. Retreating footsteps heard in passage. Room is left dark again, but the moon, which has been showing fitfully, comes on gradually to full light through the window. The panel has slipped aside in the darkness and now reveals LADY KATHERINE peering into the room through the inner portieres, in the same costume and attitude as that of the portrait. After holding the pose for a moment, she jumps down onto the chest and from that to the floor. She is very light and elflike in her movements.)

LADY KATH. *(Curtseying to the picture which has slid back into place by means of a spring at the side, which she has pressed)* Most gracious lady, did you think that I had forgotten you on this your hundredth anniversary? But there are strange noises in the castle to-night. Sounds of revelry, as if from this very chamber. *(Seeing glasses and decanter on the table)* Oh, it is true, Lord Peter has come back and you have drunk together on the very spot of your happiness and misery. *(Taking up a glass and smelling it)* Whisky—pough—how unromantic. *(Sniffing the air)* And tobacco. Do ghosts leave tracks like these? It must be so, for no living soul but me would dare enter these rooms at night. *(With excitement)* The door is open! It has not been opened before for a 100 years. What a pity I have missed them. *(To portrait)* Oh, dear Lady Katherine, please come again and bring Lord Peter with you. See, I have put on your very costume in honor of the anniversary. *(Sound of approaching footsteps off R.I. LADY KATHERINE listens for a moment, greatly fright-*

ened. In a startled whisper) The step is heavy like a man's and there is only one. *(She tries to find spring to panel—misses it in her nervousness and runs to window, dropping her scarf as she goes. She exits by the down-stage part of the casement window and is flying past the other part when LORD PETER enters. He catches a glimpse of her, but she does not see him. Lights half up)*

LORD PETER. Saints and Martyrs! What was that? *(Places candle on table, goes to window, looks out)* Nothing there. *(Picks up scarf, compares it with that in portrait. Leaves scarf on chest)* Is Hogan right? *(Pours out another drink)* To your serene Ladyship. *(Shivers. Goes over and lights fire. The fireplace should be deep so that a full glow can strike across the stage, casting horizontal shadows. LORD PETER stands for a moment with back to the fire and looking toward window, then his gaze wanders to the picture and chest)* I wonder what's in the chest? Well, it's mine, I have the right to know. By your leave, Lady. *(To portrait. Opens chest, puts scarf in and pulls out a male costume of the same period as that of LADY KATHERINE'S. Pointing to sword thrust)* Do you see that, lady? Do you see what your gallant lover suffered for your sake? Thank God, those foolish days are over. Better to live for many loves than die for one. *(Rumble of thunder)* So you don't believe me. Well then, let us have your arguments. I am open to conviction. *(Pause)* No? Very well. *(Starts to replace costume, then, as if a new thought has come to him)* I'll put this on and appear in the servants' hall. If they want ghosts in this house, by Jove, they shall have them. *(Exit R.3, taking candle and costume. Lights diminish)*

LADY KATH. *(Peers through casement window, then steps inside. She carries covered basket)*

Nobody here. It was foolish to be afraid. Forgive me, dear Lady Katherine, and I will atone for my inhospitality. (*Curtseys to portrait*) Here is all my supper saved till now. (*Removes glasses and smoking-set to small table L.; takes out various dishes and arranges table, all with fluttering excitement, furtive glances and little starts. Brings candelabra from table up L. to supper table and lights candles. Goes up to portrait, touches spring. Panel moves aside; reaches in and brings out a flagon. Touches spring again and portrait returns to place. Holding up flagon*) The same in which you drank Lord Peter's health a hundred years ago. (*As she sets flagon on table a sudden thought comes to her and she looks about room*) My scarf is gone. The fire has been lighted. The door is locked again. Who says there are no ghosts? (*Does a little mad dance around table, ending in a deep curtsy down L.*) Come to the feast. (*As LADY KATHERINE rises, she faces LORD PETER across the room, who has entered at this moment in the costume which he took out with him. Breathlessly*) Lord Peter.

LORD PETER. (*Bowing and coming down*) The same, Lady Katherine, and your humble servant. But may I ask how you know me?

LADY KATH. By the costume. Sure and it's becomin'. (*With a little touch of dialect and the endearing manner of the Irish*) No wonder they called you a heart-breaker.

LORD PETER. Thank you. (*Crosses L.*)

LADY KATH. Aren't you the darlin' ghost? I thought I should be afraid of you, but I'm not a bit. (*Goes over and looks out R.3*)

LORD PETER. I'm glad of that.

LADY KATH. (*Coming down*) Where is Lady Katherine?

LORD PETER. (*Surprised*) Lady Katherine?

LADY KATH. Yes, isn't she coming?

LORD PETER. Yes—no—oh!—that is, she is indisposed, but she knew you would be disappointed if we both stayed away, and wished me to entertain you in her stead.

LADY KATH. Do ghosts get sick?

LORD PETER. Oh, yes. Not physically, of course, but metaphysically. The anniversary is always a trying time for Lady Katherine.

LADY KATH. (*Sympathetically*) Of course.

LORD PETER. (*Indicating chair L. of table*) Won't you sit down? (*Noticing supper for the first time*) What's all this?

LADY KATH. (*Sitting down*) Oh, I brought that. I thought it would remind you of old times.

LORD PETER. How thoughtful of you. (*Sits R. of table*)

LADY KATH. I didn't suppose you could eat anything, but——

LORD PETER. On the contrary, we are sometimes permitted to come back and enjoy (*Pointedly*) all the privileges which we had formerly.

LADY KATH. How jolly.

LORD PETER. Yes, isn't it? I haven't eaten anything for a hundred years.

LADY KATH. (*Handing him plate of salad*) How hungry you must be! But I vow you haven't gone that long without drinking and smoking, Lord Peter.

LORD PETERS What makes you think so? (*Putting his hand to mouth as if worried about his breath*)

LADY KATH. (*Points to drinking and smoking set on other table*) I found those. Now confess, Lady Katherine was here with you and the whisky and tobacco on such an empty stomach made her ill, poor thing.

LORD PETER. You would not expect me to admit a lady's peccadillos?

LADY KATH. It didn't affect you?

LORD PETER. The whisky? Not otherwise than to make me glad to be alive again.

LADY KATH. (*Sadly*) I see you are a true Monahan, more's the pity.

LORD PETER. Why so? I'm proud of the fact.

LADY KATH. All the Monahans have been intemperate. The old Lord died in his cups and the new Lord they say will do the same.

LORD PETER. (*Indignantly*) How dare they?

LADY KATH. I have heard of his doings in London. What do you think? The first place he asked to see here was the whisky-still and *then* he presented his compliments to *me*.

LORD PETER. So that was why you refused to see me—him? (*Forgetting himself for a moment*)

LADY KATH. Certainly.

LORD PETER. But you must see him sometime.

LADY KATH. Not necessarily. He has given this wing of the castle to me, which is very nice of him, as I am only a poor relation and he would never come here.

LORD PETER. (*Embarrassed*) Of course not.

LADY KATH. He'd be afraid to. Everybody is.

LORD PETER. (*Relieved*) Except you.

LADY KATH. I have played in these rooms all my life and love them. Besides, I am safe from intrusion here.

LORD PETER. Except from ghosts.

LADY KATH. (*With hesitation, then impulsively*) But I couldn't be afraid of you.

LORD PETER. That's awfully nice of you. (*Leans across table and takes her hand. LADY KATHERINE, shocked by the feeling of the warm, live hand, draws away, rises and steps down-stage a little.*)

LORD PETER *rises*) By the way (*Taking scarf out of chest*) this must be yours.

LADY KATH. Yes, I knew you had it.

LORD PETER. Permit me. What will you give me for it? (*Pursing lips for a kiss as he holds the scarf over her shoulders from behind*)

LADY KATH. Fie, Lord Peter, I believe you are a flirt. (*Takes up flagon*) Let us drink to Lady Katherine.

LORD PETER. (*Indifferently*) Oh, very well.

LADY KATH. You will remember this.—Dear me! I forgot to bring a corkscrew.

LORD PETER. I always have one about me. (*Feeling for pocket*) It is in my other clothes.

LADY KATH. (*Surprised*) Your other clothes?

LORD PETER. Yes—um—you see, I changed to these for the anniversary. (*Exit R.3*)

LADY KATH. Lord Peter is unlike any ghost I ever heard of. I certainly shall wake to find this all a dream. If he were only our Lord Peter: (*With a little sigh. LORD PETER enters and opens the flagon*) These rooms will be very lonesome now. I suppose you won't come again for a hundred years.

LORD PETER. Indeed I shall. But why not meet the new Lord? He would keep you from being lonely.

LADY KATH. By making me a partner in his revels, I suppose. No, thank you.

LORD PETER. (*Pouring out wine*) Don't be unreasonable. He naturally was interested in the distillery because it is the chief source of income from the estate.

LADY KATH. But he drinks.

LORD PETER. So do you. (*Handing her a glass of wine*) So do I.

LADY KATH. Not to excess, not to make beasts out of creatures intended for the society of angels.

LORD PETER. Here's to one of the angels. (*Holding his glass toward her*)

LADY KATH. Yes, Lady Katherine. (*To the portrait*)

LORD PETER. Lady Katherine, will you not drink to Lord Peter also?

LADY KATH. Certainly.

LORD PETER. May his life be long. May he find another Lady Katherine to love—and——

LADY KATH. Oh, you mean *that* Lord Peter? (*Setting down her glass*) No, I couldn't drink to him.

LORD PETER. Why not?

LADY KATH. (*Sits L. of table*) You should hear him swear as I did to-day from the stables.

LORD PETER. Every nobleman swears.

LADY KATH. Then give me a gentleman.

LORD PETER. What other crimes does he commit? (*Sits R. of table*)

LADY KATH. He is very flirtatious.

LORD PETER. Horrible. He must be an Irishman.

LADY KATH. You needn't scoff, Lord Peter. I might forgive him if he weren't vulgar about it.

LORD PETER. Vulgar?

LADY KATH. Yes, he chucked my maid, Moya, under the chin. What do you think of that? A fine beginning for the Lord of Monahan.

LORD PETER. Dear Lady Katherine, he is young, and every Irishman loves a pretty face, but he had never seen yours.

LADY KATH. What has that to do with it?

LORD PETER. (*Earnestly*) Simply this—(*To back of table, leaning toward her*)—that he could not see you without loving you. And, loving you, he could do nothing to bring a frown to your beautiful face.

LADY KATH. (*Quick sigh and slight embarrass-*

ment; rising and crossing R. and sitting on settle, LORD PETER following to c.) Ah, Lord Peter, we do not have such lovers or such men nowadays.

LORD PETER. Lady Katherine!

LADY KATH. There is our own Lord Peter. Although he knew he was the heir, he has not visited Monahan since he was a boy.

LORD PETER. But you know how the old Lord treated him. How could he come here? He has some pride.

LADY KATH. He was not too proud to get his living from the estate, a heavy burden on the poor—and without any service of any kind in return.

LORD PETER. He led his regiment in the great war.

LADY KATH. Fighting for England.

LORD PETER. And for all free peoples everywhere. For democracy.

LADY KATH. (*Bitterly*) Free, did you say? What about Ireland? Oppressed from within and without. What will become of Ireland when her own sons, her natural leaders, live abroad in luxury at her expense instead of giving their lives if necessary in her service?

LORD PETER. Perhaps Lord Peter has never thought of that. He is young. He will learn. You must help him.

LADY KATH. That is impossible, I fear. Think of his inheritance. (*Very earnestly*) Do you not know all the wretchedness that has come upon Monahan in retribution for your violent death? Her daughters have gone mad. Her sons have rioted in drunkenness and crime. The estate has been drained to its last sovereign to support her reckless Lords, the beautiful land lies idle, the tenants are starving, and nothing but the distillery, that breeder of misery, is allowed to flourish. Do you wonder that I refuse to meet the new Lord, and am glad of

the excuse of madness to roam through these apartments and live in the glories of a vanished age?

LORD PETER. (*Relieved to change the subject, leaning toward her from back of settle*) Then let us live in the glories of a vanished age.

LADY KATH. (*Slyly*) Tell me how you wooed Lady Katherine.

LORD PETER. I could show you better. Will you play Lady Katherine? I can't do it alone, you know.

LADY KATH. (*Hesitatingly*) Yes,—if you'll be good.

LORD PETER. How could a ghost be otherwise?

LADY KATH. You don't seem a bit like a ghost.—You'll have to show me.

LORD PETER. (*Taking her by the hands and leading her to center*) Trust an Irishman for that, dead or alive. (*Business of trying to kiss her. She slips by and goes L.*) You're not playing fair.

LADY KATH. Oh, yes, I am. I know that Lady Katherine would not be so ready with her favors. You had to win them by worthy service.

LORD PETER. Quite true, but I cannot go out and fight battles for you at this moment. I can only show you results.

LADY KATH. The results then. What did you do the first night that you climbed the balcony?

LORD PETER. I led her to this settle by the fire. Ah, that was the happiest moment in our lives. (*Here he assumes the old-time, deferential gallantry of manner to which LADY KATHERINE yields, but not without diffidence. He leads her after the manner of the minuet. They sit on the settle, he taking corner L.; she leaning against him and both gazing into the fire which lights up their faces*) I took her soft, white hand in mine and kissed it and laid her head upon my shoulder, so. (*With great sincerity, as if a new sense of manhood and pro-*

tection possessed him) And here in the fire-light we pledged eternal faithfulness in life and death and sealed it with a kiss. (*Business.* LADY KATHERINE, *who has yielded to this under the spell of the moment, now suffers a revulsion of feeling, caused by both the unusual situation and the terrifying power of suddenly awakened womanhood in a young and innocent girl. She rises and starts away.* LORD PETER *rises and gently restrains her*) Did I offend you, little one?

LADY KATH. (L.) You should not have done it, Lord Peter. I shall never be happy again. (*Sobbing and burying her face in her hands*) The curse of the house of Monahan has fallen upon me. Now I know why there cannot be a happy union in this castle, why the daughters of Monahan have gone mad.

LORD PETER. (*In great surprise*) Lady Katherine!

LADY KATH. (*Turning upon him*) It is you who have destroyed their peace, but you shall not wreck my life as you did theirs. I will leave this castle to-morrow and never return to it again. (*Starting to go*)

LORD PETER. Lady Katherine. At least you will permit me to apologize.

LADY KATH. (*Pathetically*) What is the use of that? You cannot take it back. And I shall never forget.

LORD PETER. I do not wish to take it back. It is the kiss of true love, the harbinger of great happiness to come.

LADY KATH. (*In great surprise*) What are you saying, Lord Peter?

LORD PETER. The spirit of Lady Katherine has entered into the new Lord of Monahan and this is the sign whereby you shall know it. The house shall be restored to its ancient honor, rioting and drunken-

ness shall be stopped, the land shall be cultivated, the condition of the tenantry improved.

LADY KATH. Do you speak truly, Lord Peter?

LORD PETER. I do. But the success of the reformation lies in your two little hands.

LADY KATH. How so?

LORD PETER. Lord Peter will need your presence, your encouragement and advice.

LADY KATH. I cannot stay here now.

(Enter HOGAN L., with a lantern, drunk.)

HOGAN. Heaven defend my poor masther and keep away the evil spirits. *(Seeing the two costumed figures, he falls on his knees with a cry of terror)* The saints be merciful to us! Has purgathory let loose?

LADY KATH. *(In an incredulous whisper)* Hogan!

HOGAN. She knows me. The same, your Ladyship.

LORD PETER. *(In his natural voice)* Don't be frightened, Hogan, it's all right.

HOGAN. Is that you, Lord Peter? The saints be praised. Faith, if I didn't take the two of ye for a pair of ghosts in those costumes.

LADY KATH. *(Dumbfounded, in a whisper)* The new Lord, what will become of me?

LORD PETER. *(Seeing the cause of her distress, quietly to her)* Don't worry, I'll save your good name. *(To HOGAN)* Yes, Hogan, and I am entirely safe, even if I have been entertaining the ghost of Lady Katherine. *(Takes her hand and leads her toward HOGAN)*

HOGAN. That's near enough, Lord Peter. I'll lave you to the enj'yment of your heavenly visitor.

LORD PETER. Wait! Before you go, you must hear the message that she brings. She is much dis-

LADY KATH. A proper rebuke for your masquerade.

LORD PETER. Quite right, but I mean to earn a better opinion.

LADY KATH. Then we have not met in vain.
(*Turns to go*)

LORD PETER. (*Very earnestly*) Lady Katherine, you must not leave me like this. You are the only woman who has ever given me a worthy ambition—a thought beyond my personal pleasure. When I held you in my arms just now, I was filled with the desire to help, to protect, not only you, my lonely little cousin, but all our people. May I not be your big brother until I have shown myself worthy to be something more to you? You must not live in the clouds any longer, or you will go the way of the other Monahan women. Do you not need me, little sister?

LADY KATH. (*Simply and pathetically*) Oh, yes, I do, big brother, but you must give me time and show me that you are in earnest.

LORD PETER. Mavourneen. (*Embraces her gently* L.C. *A ghostly figure like that in the picture, clothed all in chiffons, is seen through the screen portrait, with hands raised as in benediction*)

CURTAIN

PROPERTIES

Old Chest—up c., containing man's costume of the Second Empire.

Platform—same height, inside of opening, back of panel.

Black Draperies, around platform, making a closet.

Draped portieres in front of closet, back of panel—same color as those in portrait.

Old wine flagon inside of this closet, corked—contains wine.

Settle, high-backed, above fireplace and at right angles to it.

Fireplace R. at c. with high mantel and chimney.

Andirons and wood for fire (logs) ready to place, with kindling.

Suitable ornaments on mantel.

Table L.C. with whiskey decanter and two glasses on tray, cigars, matches and ash-tray.

High-backed, or windsor chairs, right and left of table.

Small table up L., with branch candlestick and candles to light.

Portiere for door R.3.

Rug for floor.

SIDE PROPS—

Off-stage—R.1—Arm ring of old-fashioned keys, one of which fits the door.

Candle and lantern to be lighted for Hogan.

R.3—Corkscrew for Lord Peter.

Up L.—Covered basket containing small tablecloth, two napkins, two knives and forks, a large fork and spoon for salad, dish of salad, plate of thin bread and butter, spread, two wine-glasses.

Off L.—Thunder-drum, wind machine, rain effect, effect of birds disturbed and fluttering about (rooks), Cathedral clock bell to strike twelve, should be deep-toned and distant.

PROP CUES—

At rise of curtain L.—clock strikes twelve. Also low wind and rain and distant thunder, till Hogan's entrance. Off R., approaching footsteps of two men, growing louder till clock stops.

As Hogan sets down candle on table, bird sounds off L.

"You're a fool—yes, Lord Peter"—Wind rises a little.

"Faithfully all your life"—Rumble of thunder—low.

"That is all poppycock"—Low wind and thunder.

"Defy all the ghosts in Christendom"—Crash of thunder, loud wind and rain.

At Hogan's exit with Lord Peter—receding footsteps trailing off R.

At Lord Peter's next exit—off L.3—slip panel at back c. aside for Lady Katherine's entrance.

As she presses button, let it slide back into place again.

"In honor of the anniversary"—approaching footsteps of Lord Peter off R.1.

"Live for many loves than die for one"—rumble of thunder.

As Lady Katherine touches spring—slide panel back.

When she touches it again—close panel.

At Hogan's exit—hurried footsteps off R.

LIGHTS—

At L. below window, green flood on dimmer, for moonlight, trained to hit the painted panel at c. back.

Lightning for flutter and flash—off L.

At R. Glow for fireplace on dimmer strong enough to cast horizontal shadows.

Baby flood, same medium, trained on settle, below fireplare, on same dimmer.

Ambers in foots and borders on dimmer. (These are never used except for candle-light.)

Strip lights around back of opening at c. Back, with green lamps to simulate ghost light. Could be violet.

LIGHT CUES—

At rise of curtain—all lights out. Flicker of lightning off L.

At Hogan's entrance with candle,—foot s and borders part up.

"I hope so, Lord Peter"—distant lightning.

"That is all poppycock." Start to bring up green flood L. very slowly to half light.

"Defy all the ghosts of Christendom"—vivid lightning.

"Troubled ghost of poor old Lady Katherine." Shadow of swaying tree in the moonlight passes over picture. Commence to pull down dimmer on flood until it is gone at exit of Lord Peter and Hogan, when all lights go out. Then bring up green flood slowly till it shines full on Lady Katherine, coming through Centre opening.

At entrance of Lord Peter with candle, R.1, foots and borders part up.

As Lord Peter strikes match at fireplace R.—up with the red glow and baby spot down R.

At exit of Lord Peter R.3 with candle, out with foots and borders.

As Lady Katherine lights candelabra, up with foots and borders a little higher than before.

At Hogan's exit, begin to come down with green flood, fireplace glow and baby spot, also foots and borders, letting them fade out for the vision at back, as Lady Katherine says:

"Show me that you are in earnest," and Lord Peter answers: "Mavourneen." At this bring on the ghost light around the panel at back.

CURTAIN

First call—same picture.

Second call—footfs and borders, half on, floods, and fire-light.

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